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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY ISSUES TWO MORE DEMOLITION
ORDERS AND TEN WARNING NOTICES IN SILWAN

REF: A. JERUSALEM 783
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 736
[1](#)C. JERUSALEM 464

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Jerusalem municipal officials, accompanied by police, served two demolition orders and ten warning notices in the al-Bustan neighborhood of Silwan to Palestinian homeowners on June 10. Local residents and Palestinian officials expressed concern that as many as 88 homes in al-Bustan will be demolished imminently and urged USG intervention. The Palestinian Authority (PA) called the warning notices "the last step before the homes are demolished," and vowed to fight the demolitions through protests and legal action. The Jerusalem municipality called such actions routine. End summary.

Two Demolition Orders and Ten Warning Notices Served

[1](#)2. (C) Palestinian lawyer Ziad Kavar, who represents many Silwan residents, told Poloff on June 10 that municipal officials escorted by Israeli police served two Palestinian homeowners with demolition orders and ten with warning notices. Kavar said Silwan residents were extremely upset about the municipality's actions, and he urged USG political intervention to prevent the municipality from making Silwan "a tourist park." Palestinian lawyer Hussein Ghanayem, who is pursuing legal action in Silwan on behalf of the residents, expressed concern that the warning notices present an "imminent danger" that the residences will be demolished. Ghanayem said he and the rest of the legal team are exploring all remaining options for legal intervention.

[1](#)3. (C) PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs Hatem Abdul Qader told PolSpec on June 10 that the PA will fight the demolition orders in Silwan "in all possible ways, including protests and any remaining legal means." Abdul Qader called the warning notices "the last step before the homes are demolished," saying that the same residents had previously received administrative demolition orders. Abdul Qader said that Israeli police and municipality officials pulled out of Silwan when approached by angry Silwan residents, which may have prevented municipality officials from completing their distribution of demolition orders and warning notices to more homes in the al-Bustan neighborhood.

Municipality Downplays Actions

[1](#)4. (C) Elad Halevy, Jerusalem Mayor Barkat's Deputy Political Advisor for International Affairs, told Poloff, who called to express concern, that "issuing court orders to Jerusalem residents who violated the law is done on a daily

basis." Halevy said the municipality "tries to let the USG know the day of or the day after actual construction demolitions," but not in other cases. He said that the municipality is "trying to do good" for East Jerusalem residents, and said warning notices "encourage residents to apply for permits."

15. (C) Jerusalem City Council member and Coordinator for ICAHD Meir Margalit called the June 10 demolition orders and warning notices in Silwan an example of "the municipality's recent provocations" in East Jerusalem. He opined that the GOI "wants to fight the USG on the status of Jerusalem," which has created a "very dangerous situation" that could result in violence.

Comment

16. (C) Silwan, close to the Old City, is perhaps the most sensitive area in East Jerusalem to be threatened by home demolitions. Mayor Barkat, in his conversation with Secretary Clinton during her March visit, sought to downplay the prospect of demolitions in Silwan as media hype. The latest actions by the municipality suggest that demolitions in the area are drawing closer. Post has expressed concern to the municipality and recommends that the issue be raised with the GOI as well.

WALLES